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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
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STATE FOR WHA/CAR AND WHA/CAN  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ANTHONY FISHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [BB](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA PM STEPHEN HARPER ADDRESSES BARBADOS

REF: GEORGETOWN 654

Summary

1. (SBU) On July 19, Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, addressed a standing room only audience of approximately 200 senior officials, diplomats and top business representatives in Barbados. Harper unveiled Canada's plan to play a bigger role in the hemisphere and create "a new partnership between Canada and the Caribbean." Details of the plan were not specified, but Harper's address focused on trade, democracy building, economic development, and security. Canada may be well-placed to join Venezuela, Cuba, China and Taiwan as the region's most significant benefactors. However, the extent to which Canada will be able to compete for political and economic influence--among the other leading donors--will most likely be determined by the size and quantity of its contributions, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean where size almost always trumps substance. End Summary.

Canada's New Assistance Package

2. (U) Harper's address indicated that Canadian reengagement will reflect Canadian identity and values and will have three key components: 1) promotion of democratic values, which includes support for human rights; 2) strengthening economic development and opportunity; and 3) facing security challenges in the areas of crime, terrorism and natural disasters. Harper also specifically touched on the importance of integrated trade in the region, claiming it as the "indispensable foundation" for fair and sustainable growth. Harper promised that Canada would assist in the implementation of the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) and hinted of negotiations on a new trade agreement with Barbados and the wider English-speaking Caribbean, in addition to the Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement (CARIBCAN).

3. (SBU) Harper's other promises included a graduate and undergraduate scholarship program, increased support for the Organization of American States (OAS) and Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and continued full engagement in Haiti. Harper also invited Heads of Government to attend a meeting in 2008 in Canada. (Note: Although unclear from Harper's remarks, the meeting may coincide with the Caribbean Development Bank meeting in Halifax in 2008 and attempt to replicate the June Conference on the Caribbean in Washington. End Note.)

4. (U) More details of Canadian assistance were shared at a

CARICOM donors meeting in Guyana in July (ref A). According to reftel, the most dramatic influx of funds will be from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which will double its regional program to almost USD 60 million in 2007 and USD 600 million in development funding over the next 10 years. CIDA will focus on the areas of fiscal policy reform, democratic governance, economic renewal and social and human capital formation.

Comment

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15. (SBU) According to Harper, the Government of Canada will achieve a sustained and high level presence in the Caribbean.

Canada's reengagement may provide an opportunity for a rational voice to be heard in the region, which could counter the antagonistic rhetoric of some donors toward U.S. efforts to strengthen democracy and human rights in the Caribbean. However, the type and quantity of assistance may determine the true extent of Canada's influence in a region that prefers its gifts to be large, immediate, and politically expedient for the region's leaders. End Comment.

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